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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/710,257	06/29/2004	Ravikumar Ramachandran	FIS920040102US1	4256
32074	7590	06/30/2006	EXAMINER	
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORPORATION			DUONG, KHANH B	
DEPT. 18G			ART UNIT	
BLDG. 300-482			2822	
2070 ROUTE 52			PAPER NUMBER	
HOPEWELL JUNCTION, NY 12533			DATE MAILED: 06/30/2006	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/710,257	Applicant(s) RAMACHANDRAN ET AL.	
	Examiner Khanh B. Duong	Art Unit 2822	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 May 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 11-20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on May 26, 2006 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

Accordingly, claims 1 and 9 were amended.

Claims 11-20 remain withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Currently, claims 1-10 remain active.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the amended claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ngo et al. (U.S. 6,545,370) in view of Jung et al. (U.S. 2005/0170104 A1).

Ngo et al. ("Ngo") discloses in FIG. 2 a method of forming a semiconductor device comprising the steps: providing a substrate 20 having at least one gate stack 21 having first and second sidewalls; depositing a silicon nitride layer by means of a dual-frequency plasma enhanced CVD process (PECVD), the PECVD process comprising a temperature in the range 380°C to 420°C; forming from said silicon nitride layer first and second separate, unconnected sidewall spacers 24, the first sidewall spacer 24 extending along at least a portion of the first

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sidewall and the second spacer 24 extending along at least a portion of the second sidewall; and forming an (N or P) FET device comprising said at least one gate stack 21 having said spacer 24.

Ngo further discloses the PECVD process comprising: a temperature in the range 380°C to 420°C; a pressure in the range of 1.6 to 2.2 Torr; a low frequency power in the range of 100 to 200 watts; a high frequency power in the range of 350 to 450 watts; and precursor gases of silane, ammonia and nitrogen at flow rates in the ratio in the range of 200-450:2,000-4,000:2,000-4,000 sccm [see col. 4, lines 35-44].

Re claims 1-10, Ngo does not specifically disclose the PECVD process comprising: a temperature in the range of 400°C to 550°C; a pressure in the range of 2 to 5 Torr; a low frequency power in the range of 0 to 50 watts; a high frequency power in the range of 90 to 110 watts; and precursor gases of silane, ammonia and nitrogen at flow rates in the ratio in the range of 240:3200:4000 sccm.

Jung et al. ("Jung"), previously cited, suggests a dual-frequency PECVD process comprising: a temperature in the range of 375°C to 550°C; a pressure in the range of 2 to 15 Torr; a low frequency power in the range of 0 to 100 watts; a high frequency power in the range of 10 to 200 watts; and precursor gases of silane, ammonia and nitrogen at flow rates in the ratio in the range of 40-350:1,000-5,000:2,000-20,000 sccm [see TABLES II & III; page 7, paragraph 0087 to page 8, paragraph 0095].

Since Ngo and Jung are from the same field of endeavor, the purpose disclosed by Jung would have been recognized in the pertinent prior art of Ngo.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to optimize and select appropriate temperature, powers and flow rate

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ratio in the ranges as combinatively suggested by Ngo and Jung. The selection of parameters such as energy, power, concentration, temperature, time, depth, thickness, etc., would have been obvious and involve routine optimization which has been held to be within the level of ordinary skill in the art. "Normally, it is to be expected that a change in temperature, or in concentration, or in both, would be an unpatentable modification. Under some circumstances, however, changes such as these may be impart patentability to a process if the particular ranges claimed produce new and unexpected result which is different in kind and not merely degree from results of prior art ... such ranges are termed 'critical ranges' and the applicant has the burden of proving such criticality ... More particularly, where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation". *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). See also MPEP 2144.05.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Khanh B. Duong whose telephone number is (571) 272-1836. The examiner can normally be reached on 10:00-6:30.

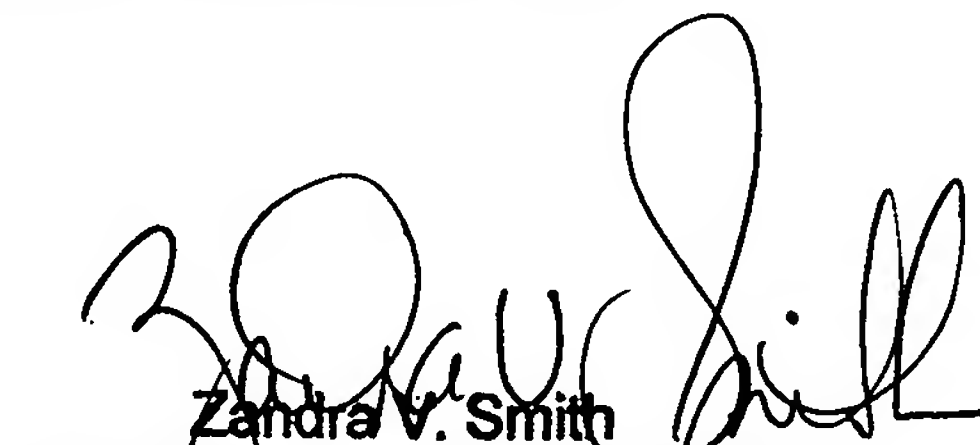
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Zandra Smith can be reached on (571) 272-2429. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



KBD



Zandra V. Smith
Supervisory Patent Examiner
24 June 2006